

- ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT -
Stevens' Trailhead Improvement Project

FOLSOM FIELD OFFICE

EA Number: CA-018-08-67

Proposed Action: Installation of a CXT toilet Facility and Trail parking lot improvement

Location: T 15N. R 9E Sec 35, MDM,
Placer County, North Fork American River. (See enclosed map)

Applicant: Folsom Field Office.

INTRODUCTION

Increased use of this nationally significant trail, and trespass onto private land has made it necessary to install a permanent toilet and add more parking spaces to the trailhead.

Need For Proposed Action:

The public land being considered in this proposed action has historically been used as the trail head for the Stevens' Trail. The original terminus for this trail was the Union Pacific railroad station in the town of Colfax. The portion of trail that connected the trail to the current BLM Trailhead has been lost to modern development, including the construction of Interstate 80. In 1999 BLM made improvements to this site, but demand by recreation users for access and parking have increased at this site to the point that cars over flow onto private land. This parking area is regularly filled to capacity in the high use months of spring and summer. This proposed action will alleviate safety concerns associated with overflow when the parking area is full and accommodate the public's need for trailhead parking.

Conformance with Applicable Land Use Plan:

The proposed action is subject to the Sierra Resource Management Plan approved 2/15/08. This plan has been reviewed to determine that the proposed actions conform to the land use plan terms and conditions as required by 43 CFR 1610.5. The proposed action is located within the North Fork American Special Recreation Management Area.

Relationship to Statutes:

Regulations and Plans; According to the Master Title Plat, the subject lands requiring a EA, are managed by the BLM Folsom Field Office, in Placer County.

Affected Environment

The project area is on the north side of the North Fork American River, at an elevation of approx. 2300ft in the Sierra Nevada foothills. The vegetation is mixed conifer. The project area will not impact any unique soil formations. The North Fork American River is a Wild and Scenic River, classified as Wild. The project is well outside the Wild and Scenic boundary. The project area has a Visual Resource management (VRM) Class I. The project area is an existing parking facility; improvements to this already disturbed area would not impact the VRM for the area.

Threatened and Endangered Species: In this area there are few rare species. One BLM Sensitive Species,

Clarkia biloba brandegeae, (Brandegee's Clarkia) could occur within the general area of the project. The project has been reviewed by a BLM botanist and is not anticipated to have any appreciable effect on this species.

There are sensitive cultural resources in Adjacent to the project area. The local Native American Tribes have been contacted, and will be present, as well as the BLM staff Archeologist, during some phases of construction.

Project Description

This action will improve the existing parking lot by adding a toilet facility and five additional parking spots. (See attached site plan)

This action will not involve excavation of the existing bank to place the CXT toilet. The removal of a small berm to create parking spaces, and the replacement of an existing water line will also take place with this action.

On site fill will be used to create parking spaces on the north side of the project. A toilet facility (CXT Gunnison model) will be installed at the southwest corner of the parking area. Drainage concerns will be addressed by re-grading the parking area and directing the drainage to existing ditches, rather than the trail tread where it flows currently. Aggregate road base will be placed on the parking surface to a 3' depth. Some small trees (12' or less DBH) and Blackberries will be removed to accommodate construction.

DESCRIPTION OF NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

Under this alternative, no improvements will be made to this area. The public using the recreation area will continue to use the area for parking. This eventually will cause an undesirable management condition and encourage trespass on private land.

Alternatives Considered

Proposed Action Alternative

The proposed action alternative is to approve this project as previously described. This would involve completing the project as described in the General Site Plan. Additional details concerning project specifics are available in the attached Site Plan. (See attached Site Plan and map for location)

No Action Alternative

This alternative would deny the project. This would lead to a very undesirable management condition, and effect safe, sustainable access to thousands of recreationists and is contrary to BLM recreation management goals.

DESCRIPTION OF IMPACTS

PROPOSED ACTION ALTERNATIVE

General Impacts: Impacts from this project will involve excavation and earth moving, paving and compacting. There will be considerable surface disturbance. And some vegetation and tree removal. Some Visual impacts will result from this project, but impacts will not change the VRM I classification. If archaeological resources are uncovered during the excavation process all work will stop and a BLM archaeologist will assess the situation.

Standard construction practices will be employed to alleviate dust problems, and potential erosion. Some temporary increase in noise levels will occur during construction, but are not expected to adversely affect the public. Some trail users will be displaced temporarily.

This project area will be monitored to insure noxious weeds do not get established.

Cumulative Impacts

Because there are specific adverse impacts expected for soils of special status species, no cumulative impacts are expected at a larger scale. Some short term impacts to recreation are expected during construction. There are no known conditions that would create cumulative impacts from this small project.

NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

General Impacts: This alternative is counter to the management objectives and goals of the BLM Recreation management. This alternative would result in an undesirable management condition. Under this alternative, the existing conditions would continue at this site, and could lead to increased trespass onto private land. This alternative and would not serve the public interest.

Environmental Impact Summary: Critical Elements required by law to be addressed.

<u>Critical Element</u>	<u>Affected</u>		<u>Critical Element</u>	<u>Affected</u>	
	Yes	No		Yes	No
Air Quality	—	X	T & E Species	—	1
ACECs	—	X	Wastes, Hazardous/Solid	—	X
Cultural Resources	—	X	Water Quality	—	X
Environmental Justice	—	X	Subsurface	—	X
Farmlands, Prime/Unique	—	X	Surface	—	X
Floodplains	—	X	Wetlands/Riparian Zones	—	X
Invasive, Nonnative Sp.	—	X	Wild & Scenic Rivers	—	X
Nat. Amer. Rel. Concerns	—	X	Wilderness	—	X

1) Populations of a BLM Sensitive Species (*Clarkia biloba ssp brandegeae*) may occur in the project area, but the project, as proposed is not anticipated to have any negative impacts on this annual plant.

Mitigation Measures

Folsom staff specialists have reviewed the project and have identified no potential impacts which are in need of mitigation. Contractual guidelines set up to insure protection of this area will be strictly monitored and enforced.

PERSONS AND AGENCIES CONSULTED


Consulted with; Al Franklin, BLM Botanist
Peggy Crastan, BLM Biologist
James Barns, BLM Archeologist

EA PREPARERS

Prepared by:


Jeff Horn, Outdoor Recreation Planner

Date:

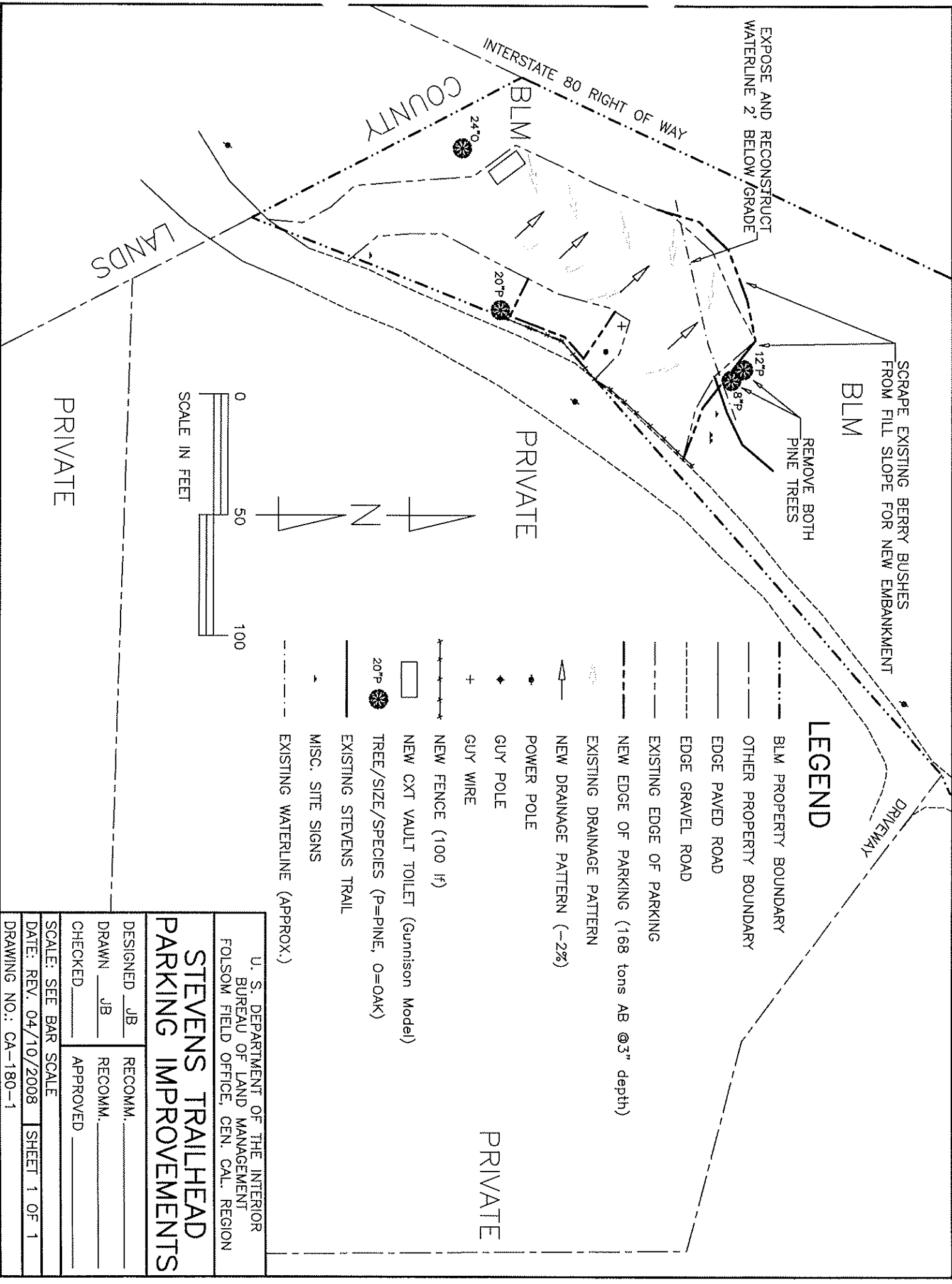

6/26/08

Approved by:

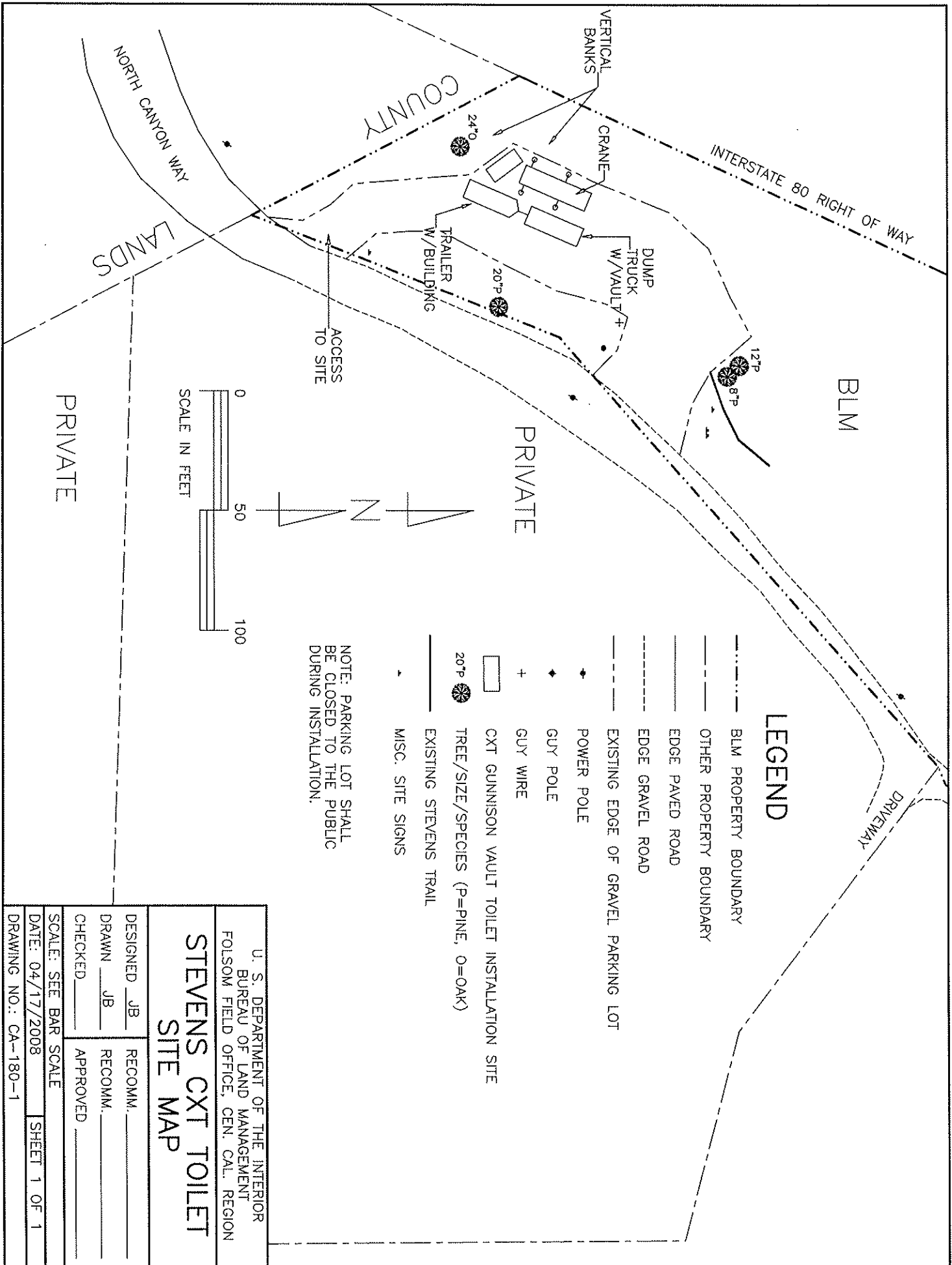

James Barns, NEPA Coordinator

Date:

6/26/08



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT FOLSOM FIELD OFFICE, CEN. CAL. REGION	
STEVENS TRAILHEAD PARKING IMPROVEMENTS	
DESIGNED <u>JB</u>	RECOMM. _____
DRAWN <u>JB</u>	RECOMM. _____
CHECKED _____	APPROVED _____
SCALE: SEE BAR SCALE	
DATE: REV. 04/10/2008	SHEET 1 OF 1
DRAWING NO.: CA-180-1	



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT FOLSOM FIELD OFFICE, CEN. CAL. REGION	
<h2>STEVENS CXT TOILET SITE MAP</h2>	
DESIGNED <u>JB</u>	RECOMM. <u> </u>
DRAWN <u>JB</u>	RECOMM. <u> </u>
CHECKED <u> </u>	APPROVED <u> </u>
SCALE: SEE BAR SCALE	
DATE: 04/17/2008	SHEET 1 OF 1
DRAWING NO.: CA-180-1	



United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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Stevens Trailhead Improvement Project (CA-180-08-67)

Finding of No Significant Impact

June 2008

It is my determination that this decision will not result in significant impacts to the quality of the human environment. Anticipated impacts are within the range of impacts addressed by the Sierra MFP. Thus, the project does not constitute a major federal action having a significant effect on the human environment; therefore, an environmental impact statement (EIS) is not necessary and will not be prepared. This conclusion is based on my consideration of CEQ's following criteria for significance (40 CFR §1508.27), regarding the context and intensity of the impacts described in the EA and based on my understanding of the project:

1) Impacts can be both beneficial and adverse and a significant effect may exist regardless of the perceived balance of effects. Potential impacts include vegetation removal, soil disturbance and temporary noise and dust due to Parking lot improvements and toilet installation. However, none of these impacts would be significant at the local scale or cumulatively because of the small scale of the project and project design features that would reduce erosion and visual impacts to immeasurable levels. Visual resources that serves as an outstandingly remarkable value for the North Fork American Wild and Scenic River, will not be impacted due to construction of the additional parking spaces and toilet facility because the building will be small and designed to blend with the existing landscape.

2) The degree of the impact on public health or safety. No aspects of the project have been identified as having the potential to significantly and adversely impact public health or safety. In fact, the project is designed to enhance public health by providing a safe sanitation facility.

3) Unique characteristics of the geographic area. The project area is outside the North Fork American Wild and Scenic River corridor. The project will not significantly affect ORVs for the North Fork American River.

4) The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial effects. No anticipated effects have been identified that are scientifically controversial. As a factor for determining within the meaning of 40 C.F.R. § 1508.27(b)(4) whether or not to prepare a detailed environmental impact statement, "controversy" is not equated with "the existence of opposition to a use." *Northwest Environmental Defense Center v. Bonneville Power Administration*, 117 F.3d 1520, 1536 (9th Cir. 1997). "The term 'highly controversial' refers to instances in which 'a substantial dispute exists as to the size, nature, or effect of the major federal action rather than the mere existence of opposition to a use.'" *Hells Canyon Preservation Council v. Jacoby*, 9 F.Supp.2d 1216, 1242 (D. Or. 1998).

5) The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are likely to be highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks. The analysis does not show that this action would involve any unique or unknown risks.

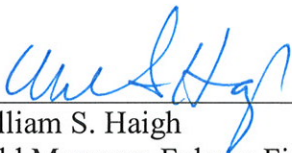
6) *The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.* Facilities maintenance/improvement is not precedent setting.

7) *Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.* No significant site specific or cumulative impacts have been identified. The project is consistent with the actions and impacts anticipated in the Sierra RMP.

8) *The degree to which the action may adversely affect National Historic Register listed or eligible to be listed sites or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural or historical resources.* The project area does not include any sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places or sites known to be eligible.

9) *The degree to which the action may adversely affect ESA listed species or critical habitat.* No ESA listed species (or their habitat) are known to occur in the project area.

10) *Whether the action threatens a violation of environmental protection law or requirements.* There is no indication that this decision will result in actions that will threaten such a violation.



William S. Haigh
Field Manager, Folsom Field Office

6-27-08
Date